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ABSTRACT

Basic similarities in the communication industry of 75 years ago and that of today suggest that much will not change in communication in the next 75 years. Future thinkers such as J. Naisbitt and A. Toffler, however, believe that major economic and technological changes will place a high priority on effective communication. Information, Toffler suggests, will be the basic raw material and will have a significant impact on education, scientific research, and the communication media. In addition to anticipating important changes in the corporate structure, a re-emergence of the family, and a shift away from the protestant work ethic, Toffler expects new developments in the American personality: ability to adapt to changed circumstances, awareness of how jobs interact, and sensitivity to fellow workers. T. Peters's and R. Waterman's characterization of superior companies in their book, "In Search of Excellence," points out the centrality of the spoken word. In the future, effective communication will become not simply a survival skill, but a frontier creating skill. Two factors influencing education in the next 75 years are the decay of the infrastructure, requiring massive reinvestment and limiting funds for higher education, and the Northeast's gradual reassumption of intellectual and financial leadership in the United States. (Demographic data indicating important population trends are appended.) (MM)

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Communication Education: The Next 75 Years

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In reparing for this paper, I have been struck by the sheer insanity of what I agreed to do: to comment on communication education in the next 75 years. It seems very much like a long range weather forecast, more speculation than rational thinking. Few education prognosticators in the past 10-20 years have been accurate about trends; what gives me the temerity to think I might do better?

I must have taken leave of my senses. It does, indeed, require a leap of faith to believe that the human race as we know it will still be around 75 years from now. I sincerely hope we will, but I'm certainly not willing to predict that we won't have destroyed a good part of the northern hemisphere and created dust clouds that freeze out the rest of the population.

But, assuming we will resist the temptation to use our weapons of destruction and that no major accidents occur, and having agreed to do this, I feel the need to try. Therefore, I did some obligatory reading: the latest Carnegie Report, Megatrends. I reviewed the three articles Marlene sent to which our papers are to be, in part, a reaction (which papers, not incidentally, focus only toward the year 2,000 or, more generally, on the 21st century). I returned to my personal favorite future thinker, Toffler, reviewed Future Shock and reread The Third Wave. I thought about books I have recently read that strongly influence my current thinking: Carol Gilligan's In a Different Voice, Norman Cousin's The Healing Heart (No, it includes nothing relevant to this paper, but I highly recommend it for all you Type As out there.) and In Search of Excellence by THomas Peters and Robert Waterman, Jr.

I was still at a loss--I still am. But, as is probably natural for someone with my education living in Virginia, I concluded the only way to get some perspective on this issue is to look back. Even accepting the point that change itself accelerates change and knowing that life 75 years hence will be more different from now than things now differ from 75 years ago, I believed I could best get a handle on this question by reminding myself of what things were like 75 years ago.

As reading old newspapers has always been a source of inspiration for me, I turned to that venerable institution, which was even then publishing "all the news that's fit to print," The New York Times. And while Naisbitt may be right and today New York may no longer be a bellwether state, I am sure that it was 75 years ago, so I do not apologize for not looking at a California, Florida, Conneticut, Colorado or Washington papers (though such a comparison would be fascinating).

What did I find and did it provide inspiration? Lots. And some.

For trivia buffs, I found many items of interest. The Times of 1909 sold for $.17 a week. "Almost perfect" shoes for women could be obtained for $2.59 a pair; a man's overcoat for $14.75. Less trivial was that Thursday, Dec. 31, 1908 had been date of a disastrous earthquake in Italy that killed in excess of 200,000 and I was reminded that the San Francisco earthquake was only two years earlier and again reinforced for not moving West with what seems to be everyone else.

More relevant in view of the topic of this panel is that the 9th Annual International Automobile Show with 300 exhibitors had just opened; that 1908 as the year that New York's East River Tunnel opened.

Also relevant were some of the advertisements. Included were ads for Saks, Bloomingdales, Macy's, Lord & Taylor, Maxwell (noting that it is possible to make a moderate priced car, with listed prices of $825 & 1425), Cadillac, Firestone, Goodyear, Dewars Scotch, Old Crow Whiskey, for a hospital announcing its services as "Alcoholism Cured," and for a coast to coast trip to California.

So, I was reminded that while the automobile is relatively new, it had become a well estabished American industry by 1909; and many of the tastes and concerns of today existed even then (travel, for instance, and alcoholism, now the 2nd leading cause of death in this country.)

While not doing a detailed content analysis that would be needed for these comments to be more than impressionistic, I was struck more by the similarity to today of the items in the paper than by the differences. This reminded me that in speculating about the vast changes to come (and indeed there will be many in the next 75 years) we should not overlook the threads of our life that will remain essentially unchanged.

For example, it is certain that the hundreds of thousands (indeed millions) of people whose jobs are automobile related far exceeds the relatively few whose work was so related 75 years ago. But, if one defines that somewhat differently and looks at the prcportion of the

population dependent upon transportation related jobs then recalls the centrality of railroading in those days, the differences aren't quite so vast. Indeed, while perhaps the largest change in lives since 1909 is the rural to urban population shift, even the farmers of 75 years ago depended upon the transportation industry to secure machinery and sell their products. The farmer of 1909 was not self-sufficient nor producing only for subsistence.

So, beyond noting that much will not change, what have I to say about education, specifically communication education, in the next 75 years?

First, and obviously, education will be strongly affected by the changes in society during that time. Whether one views the role of education as to preserve and pass on the traditions and wisdom of the past or to create new frontiers of knowledge, or both, the activity cannot exist separate from the mileu of which it is a part.

Thus, it is instructive to spend a few minutes reviewing some of the data you will find appended to this paper. It illustrates some of the trends of recent years and which show no signs of abating. Note specifically the move of population to cities, the aging of our population, and the increasing proportions of women in the population.

Most of us are so accustomed to knowing that women outnumber men in this country that it comes as somewhat of a shock to note such a distribution is relatively recent. (1940 was the first year that women outnumbered men.) I think that is significant, as obviously is the increasing age

of the population. These two major trends are especially significant as they represent the convergence of two types of people whose interests and concerns have been shown to differ in major ways from the emphases in government and politics (at all levels) when those institutions are controlled by men to serve the interests of a particular group of men.

As a result of these trends, which will continue and be reinforced by some other factors, we will note major changes in interests and in focus by government and political leaders. Some of these changes will benefit educators (concern for people and the arts, appreciation of nature as distinguished from exploitation); some will require huge changes in the way we do things (move to cooperative methods rather than competitive).

A second observation I have is that in the near term communication education will continue to enjoy a surge of popularity. Whatever analysis of "trends" one reads suggests currents of change that will make successful communication prerequisite, not just to effectiveness, but to survival in the coming years.

Look for instance at the 10 "megatrends" identified by Naisbitt.

1. becoming an information society
2. movement to high tech accompanied by high touch
3. becoming part of a global economy in which U.S. role is not that of industrial leader
4. movement from short-term thinking to longer
5. innovation is returning, from bottom-up
6. shift from institutional to self-help
7. discarding representatived democracy as inappropriate in age of instantaneous information - moving to forms of direct democracy,

8. moving from hierarchical frameworks to informal networks - esp. important in business
9. movement to South & West- leaving the old industrial cities of the North
10. from a narrow either/or society with limited range of personal choices to a free-wheeling multiple-option society

Note how many of those trends either place a premium on effective communication or make such effectiveness an absolute prerequisite to participating in the trend rather than being left behind in the backwash.

I use that metaphor deliberately as a means of introducing the major components of the Third Wave discussed by Toffler:

Toffler begins by stressing what he calls the central fact of the future: that no one instiution will dominate. (Sound like Naisbitt?) He goes on to note that information will be the basic raw material, which will necessitate radical changes in education, scientific research and communication media. He suggests that schools will shift away from present methods that are still "largely geared to producing Second Wave workers for highly repetitive work,* ~~largely geared to producing Second Wave workers for highly repetitive work,"*~~ and that more education will take place outside the formal classroom which, of course notes a major trend now occuring. More money is currently spend on education in business, industry and government than in the schools.

Perhaps especially noteworthy for those of us in communication education is Toffler's argument that the media will be de-massified. Indeed, he suggests the entire society will largely follow that trend. Due to electronic wizardry, the electronic cottage will become one of the major units of production. Instead of domination of mass production, major segments of the society will be involved in prosumption (producing for consuption).

The electronic cottage will be a major unit of both work and education, which will lead to re-emergence of the family. Note, however, that family of the future will differ considerably from the conventional family (already family relationships will differ significantly.) These changes will bring a changed appreciation of the role of hosuework, and fundamental changes in the role of women.

The changes in society will bring major changes in corporate structure. Toffler believes that future managers will need the flexibility to "operate as capably in an open-door, free-flow style as in a hierarchical mode, . . . [to be able to] work in an organization structured like an Egyptian pyramid as well as in one that looks like a Calder mobile, with a few thin managerial strands holding a complex set of nearly autonomous modules that move in response to the gentlest breeze."**

Toffler points out that the personality of the future (noting that in all the various discussions over the years of the "new man" that seldom is a "new woman" mentioned) will differ drastically from today. One

cannot live in new environment without being changed. The Protestant Ethic, with its emphasis on thrift, unremitting toil and the deferral of gratification, and its rewards for objectivity, rationality, indivdiualism, respect for authority and abstract thinking will no longer dominate. Does this sound like the report of Daniel Yankelovich? It certainly does to me. To a very great extent, this "new" worker is with us today, especially in the young.

To fit comfortably into the future, workers will need to be "men and women who accept responsibility, who understand how their work dovetails with others, who can handle ever larger tasks, who adapt swiftly to changed circumstances and who are sensitively attuned to the people around them."*** Does that sound as if communication will be essential to effectiveness on the part of that "new" workforce? It does to me.

Moreover, this new work force will reflect a convergence of those trends in population I described earlier. Increasing numbers of women and persons over 60 will provide what the future workforce will need: a balance between objectivity and subjectivity. So-called male and female attitudes will be balanced in people of both sexes. This change alone will create a radically different educational atmosphere from that of today.

Finally, to emphasize my argument that many important things of today will remain, I'd like to note the eight basic attibutes of characteristic of existing superior companies, as identified in the significant best-seller (no the two terms aren't necessarily

contradictory), from Peters & Waterman's In Search of Excellence.

1. A bias for action
2. Staying close to the customer
3. Encouraging autonomy and innovation
4. Treating people (employees) as root source of quality and productivity imrovement
5. Hands on and value driven
6. Sticking to "the knitting"--staying with the business they are in--however defined.
7. Simple form, lean staff
8. Simultaneous loose-tight nature --at once both centralized (about core values, e.g., IBM & service; Digital or Caterpiller & reliability;) and decentralized (about implementation).

When I study these comments (and dozens like them among the management analysts) the most significant factor to me is, to borrow a phrase, the centrality of the spoken word. Speech communication, broadly defined, will continue to grow in importance. It will become, even more than it has been (if that is possible), a survival skill. And during the next 75 years it will move far beyond that to an advancement and frontier creating skill.

So, in that "brave new world" of 2,000 and 2059 educators at work and at home (when the two can be distinguished) will use (as they always have) and teach (more than they ever have) about communication.

Whatever one calls the future--the information age, the electronic age, the Third Wave, the space age--it will be an era where the effective communicator reigns. And more than that, while most people in the next 75 years will learn to communicate to, through and with computers, blips and beeps, bits and bytes will not replace the spoken word. Nor, in the next 75 years will direct transmission of thoughts occur as some far out futurists predict. While that may be a potential of some distant future, 75 years is not that long, not even with the accelerating pace of change. And, even were it to become possible, not just potential for those on the frontiers, speech will not be discarded. Just as today our move into high tech is accompanied by a strong desire to "stay in touch," so in the future, men and women will cling to their talk. The basic human motivations of the New Psycho-sphere (to use Toffler's words): community, structure, and meaning (citing Rollo May) will require that we maintain human relationships through both touch and talk

There are other significant factors about the next 75 years that will be particularly significant to those of us here since this paper is being done for an ECA convention. Let me comment briefly on two of them:

The first is the decay of the infrastructure; the second is the move of population to the so-called "Sunbelt." The former is real and will require massive investments. Properly directed, these investments could deal with a huge current problem of the Northeastern United States, unemployment and welfare (yes, I see it largely as singular). But at the same time, were that to occur--and I'm not brave enough to predict--

it will divert resources from state (and I use the term to include all levels of "the state," local, state, and national) supported education.

That fact will significantly affect those of us in higher education, especially. As funds are limited, fewer and fewer state resources will be available. What limited funds there are will necessarily be devoted to K-12. Post secondary education more and more will be paid for by the users and it is quite difficult to predict the outcomes of that. One result will be more and more part-time students, with all the changes in our institutions that brings. In general, it will mean most schools will develop the characteristics of community colleges, and of places like George Mason University. While another possibility is an impetus to intensify the stratification between rich and poor, upper/middle and lower classes, I think that not likely to occur, due to the nature of the "new" personality. As the society becomes more "androgynous" (for want of a better term), the competitive economy and government which ignores those who can't keep up will atrophy.

The impetus to repair the infrastructure will intensify in the near future because that second great "trend" of the present will slow (as it has, I think, begun to), then halt and perhaps even reverse. Why so bold an assertion? One major resource that only parts of the Sunbelt have: water. With exception of the Southeast, the Sunbelt is woefully short on water and will become more so.

So, not only will the Northeast NOT be abandoned to decay as some of our friends who've escaped might think, it will continue to be an important

leading force. Naisbitt may find that in the past 20 years or so New York has not been a bellwether state, but the Northeast still maintains a huge reservoir of intellectual and natural resources. I am so bold as to believe that in the next 75 years it will also regain a major portion of its intellectual and financial leadership of the nation.

This latter force will interact with the need to repair the infrastructure. And it's hard for me to predict exactly what the outcome is likely to be, but it will have both positive and negative impacts upon us. It will be expensive, but it will bring economic benefits also. Whichever predominates, it is clear that communication educators, along with educators of all disciplines will require flexibility, thorough preparation, and, to endure the stress of coping with major changes, Cousin's prescription for healing: love, laughter, exercise and serenity.

1. Alvin Toffler, The Third Wave, New York: William Morrow and Company, 1980. *335 **249 ***365

2. Rollo May, Power and Innocence:. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972), p. 34.

3. There are other major trends upon which I haven't commented. They will create huge social issues and changes. What the changes will be can only hazily be foreseen. Foremost among the unmentioned are energy and the increase in % of population that is Eastern and Hispanic. Indeed, overall the growing influence of the Third World and decline of U.S. dominance of world could hasten that catyclysm which I assumed at the outset of the paper would not occur. It is not inconceivable that a ruling elite could desperately turn to the unspeakable force in an effort to re-establish control over a world it does not understand. As Toffler's image so well emphasizes, not all the debris caught between waves escapes.

Appendix

Data from:

Historical Statistics of the U.S.: Colonial Times to 1970. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Dept. of Commerce Bureau of Census, 1975.

1982-83 Statistical Abstract of the United States. (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1983.

1980 Census Population Characteristics: United States Summary. (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Department of Commerce Bureau of Census, 1982.

NOTE:

Readers who pay careful attention to the figures in this appendix may note the disconcerting fact that the totals differ. They do so because figures taken from the three different sources are not exactly the same. While the figures do not vary in what I believe to be significant amounts, it is somewhat irritating to discover that population totals, for instance, for 1970 are reported differently in each of the three sources cited.

Population #s in thousands except when *d		1909/1910			1960		1970			1980	
Population (p.8)		90490			179323		204879			226606	
Male (p.9)		46545	51%						49%	110032	
Female		43945	49%						51%	116473	
White		80339	88%						85%	194779	
Minority		10151	12%						15%	26624	
By age (p.10)											
5-14	51%	10509 18670	32%			45%	17159 40733	28%	41%	16348 34942	22%
15-24		17871					36496			42487	
25-64	44%	39562				44%	90409			107280	
65+	4.3%	3878				10%	20085		11%	25549	
Total over 14											
men	61%	33247				47%	71486		47%	83836	
women	39%	20905				52%	77910		52%	91420	
Men											
single	40%	13456				29%	20427		30%	25132	
married	54%	18067				65%	47001		60%	50354	
widowed		1467					2131				
divorced/separated	6%	156				6%	1927		10%	6194	
not reported		103									
Women											
single	31%	9827				22%	17624		23%	21027	
married	57%	17667				61%	47666		54%	50072	
widowed		3167					9615			11318	
divorced	11%	185				16%	3004		22%	9002	
not reported		59									

NOTE: 1940 first time more W thn M

	1909/1910	1960	1970	1980
M/F ratio	106	97.1	94.8	94.5
under 14	102.1	103.4	103.9	104.7
14-24	101.2	98.7	98.7	101.7
25-44	110.2	95.7	95.5	97.4
45-64	114.4	95.7	91.6	90.7
over 64	101.1	82.8	72.1	67.6
Median Age			28	30
Single person Hsehld	814(1900)	2357(1930	10,692	
Birth rt/1000	30		18.4	
Labor force (p.127)	38167		85903	109042
>14 til 1947;16 aftr	53 % of pn		61.3% of pn	64.2% pn
male	30092		54343	63396
	81.3% M pn		80.6% M pn	79.9% M pn
female	8076		31560	45646
	23% F pop		43% F pop	51.6% F pn
women in labor force				
%distribution (p.133				
single	60	24	22	25
married	25	60	63	60
married/husband pr			59	
widowd/divorced	15	16	14	15
% of women	25		42	
Places >1 million	3		6	6
" < 2,500	11830		13709	
" 500,000-1 mil	5		20	
" 250,000-500,000	11		30	
Pop'n in urban local 46%	41999	73%	149325	73% 167051
" " rural locali	49973		53887	59495
# telephones	6996		120212	

College/University data	1909/1910	1960	1970	1980
# Community colleges		521 *	886 *	1274
1st lsted - 1918	46 *			
Enrollment(undrgrd)		451	1630	4525
Four year +	934 *	1447 *	1639 *	1957
Enrollment-undergra		2776	5259	6472
Faculty	36		720	
men	29		464	
women	7		1?2	
Degree credit enrolm	355	3583	7920	-
% pop'n 18-24	2.9		32	
Men		2257	4637	5874
Women	-	1326	3284	6223
Undercrad	346	3227	6645	10998
Grad	9		900	
Degrees conferred*	39755		1065391	
BA,S,or 1st prof	37199		827734	
" men	28762		484174	
" women	8437		343060	
% HS grads 4yrs befo	30		31	
MA,S,or 2nd prof	2113		208291	
" men	1555		125624	
" women	558		82667	
% B grads 2 yrs befo	6		31	
PhDs	443		29866	
men	399		25890	
women	44		3976	
HS grads	8.6% 17yr olds		75.6% 17 yr. olds	
men			1439	
women			1467	

	1960	1970	1980
% of col/uni enrollm			
M	65.5	59.4	49.4
"18-24	46.2	44.9	35.4
"25-34	16.6	12.7	13
F	34.5	40.6	50.6
"18-24	26.6	33.4	35.6
"25-34	4.4	5.5	13.5
White	93.6	91.2	87.2
" M	62	54.8	43.6
" F	31.6	36.3	43.6
Minority	6.4	7	9.9
" M	3.5	3.4	4.3
" F	2.9	3.6	5.6

Enrollment by field (1978)*	total	Male	Female
Agriculture	144000	82000	62000
Biological Science	303000	155000	148000
Business	1956000	1138000	819000
Education	781000	181000	601000
Engineering	565000	498000	66000
English/Journalism	192000	68000	125000
Health	872000	303000	569000
Other Humanities	741000	325000	416000
Law	220000	150000	70000
Math/stat/comp.sci	142000	90000	52000
Physical Sciences	193000	132000	61000
Social Sciences	763000	374000	389000